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NEWS from Congressman CHARLES W. WHALEN, Jr.

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#68-86

May 16, 1968

FOR RELEASE UPON RECEIPT

Congressman Charles W. Whalen, Jr. (R-Ohio) today said a new Air Force plan for "superhard" underground missile silos requires a re-examination of the extent of defensive Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) deployment needs.

Whalen, a member of the House Armed Services Committee, referred to disclosures last week that the Air Force hopes to increase the hardness of Minuteman intercontinental ballistic missile sites by a factor of 1,000 per cent.

This hardening would quadruple the megatonnage presently needed to destroy existing underground silos and require virtually perfect accuracy by attacking missiles, he said. The Soviets are believed to lack this capability for the foreseeable future.

The Ohio Congressman referred to remarks made by Air Force Secretary Harold Brown before the Senate Appropriations Committee.

He quoted Brown as saying "it seems as efficient or more efficient for us to counter Soviet missile warheads by deploying the superhard missile silos than by deploying ABM defenses for our missile fields. In a sense hardened silos are a form of missile defense. Eventually, we also may need active ABM defenses around our missile fields."

Whalen, in a speech on the House floor, called on Brown to furnish a comprehensive analysis of the question "including detailed comparative cost estimates."

"The superhard silo concept casts a justifiable shadow over the urgency of arguments advanced by advocates of a rapid and extensive deployment of an ABM system," he said.

"Before we rush headlong into the creation of a \$40 billion system at a time of serious financial crisis, we must assure ourselves that it is warranted."

"We have had expensive projects in the past where billions of dollars have been expended needlessly as we now know with the wisdom of hindsight," he said.

He interpreted Brown's remarks as an indication "that there may be a less expensive method of insuring the survivability of our intercontinental ballistic missiles than that of employing the multi-billion-dollar ABM system."

Whalen said he plans to seek the support of Armed Services Committee colleagues in airing the issue.

Copy of speech enclosed.

Remarks

by

Congressman Charles W. Whalen, Jr. (R-Ohio)

On the Floor of the House of Representatives

May 16, 1968

on

THE IMPACT OF SUPERHARD ICBM SILOS ON ABM DEPLOYMENT

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct the attention of the Members of the House to testimony given last week before the Senate Appropriations Committee by Dr. Harold Brown, Secretary of the Air Force.

In his statement, Dr. Brown revealed for the first time a new development that could have a major bearing on the extent of the proposed ABM, or Anti-Ballistic Missile defense system.

In my view, this new information brought out by Dr. Brown raises questions that demand careful scrutiny by the Congress concerning the potentially huge outlays encompassed in any massive deployment of the ABM.

At the very minimum, the Secretary's disclosures certainly call for a comprehensive analysis of what the timetable for the ABM should be.

What Dr. Brown outlined was an Air Force plan to build "highly survivable superhard silos" to house either the Minuteman III intercontinental ballistic missile, the up-coming replacement for the present Minuteman I, or the Advanced ICBM, currently designated as WS-120A. I am sure that there are those who will be inclined to dismiss the mention of "superhard" silos as another cute Madison Avenue euphemism which means very little in real strategic terms. But a look at the numbers associated with this plan is revealing.

What the Air Force expects to achieve in the construction of these new underground facilities for our missiles is an improvement in the ability of those containers to withstand nuclear detonations by a factor of 1,000 per cent. The hardness ratings of the missile silos envisioned would be 2,500 pounds per square inch or approximately 10 times the current hardness. The related control areas would have hardness ratings approaching 7,000 pounds per square inch.

Silo strengths of this magnitude would require an attacker to deliver four times the megatonnage he would need today to assure destruction of our missiles. In addition, the accuracy of the incoming missiles would have to be virtually perfect.

The Soviet Union, however, is not believed capable of developing the striking power required to destroy our second-strike missile capability, with the superhard silo improvement, within the foreseeable future.

In his testimony, Dr. Brown made the following statement, which I consider to be significant:

"Against present estimates of Soviet missile capabilities it seems as efficient or more efficient for us to counter Soviet missile warheads by deploying the superhard missile silos than by deploying ABM defenses for our missile fields.

"In a sense, hardened silos are a form of ABM defense.

"Eventually, we also may need active ABM defenses around our missile fields."

In effect, Dr. Brown is saying that there may be a less expensive method of insuring the survivability of our intercontinental ballistic missiles than that of employing the multi-billion-dollar ABM system.

Last year, this issue of the ABM became one of great contention when it was disclosed that the Soviet Union was developing and appeared to be emplacing its own ABM system. Many reacted with demands for greater haste on the part of the United States to move ahead with its own ABM.

The superhard silo concept casts a justifiable shadow over the urgency of arguments advanced by advocates of a rapid and extensive deployment of an ABM system. Before we rush headlong into the creation of a \$40 billion system at a time of serious financial crisis, we must assure ourselves that it is warranted.

We have had expensive projects in the past where billions of dollars have been expended needlessly as we now know with the wisdom of hindsight. An objective, unemotional analysis is what is required so that years hence we can conclude that we acted with foresight and responsibility.

I feel that a thorough analysis of the impact of the superhard silo concept on the deployment plans for the ABM is mandatory at this time. I call upon Air Force Secretary Brown to provide the Committee with a comprehensive analysis of this question, including detailed comparative cost estimates.

I intend to seek the support of my Committee colleagues on this airing and hope that the distinguished chairman of the Committee will lend his full support to determine what the proper course of action should be.

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